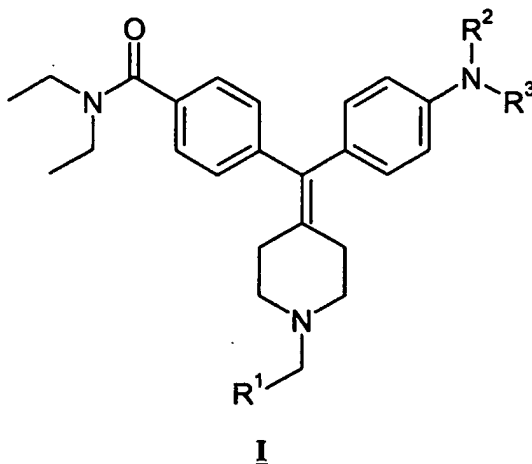


What is claimed is :

1. A compound of formula I, a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, diastereomers, enantiomers, or mixtures thereof:



wherein

- R^1 is selected from C_{6-10} aryl and C_{2-6} heteroaryl, wherein said C_{6-10} aryl and C_{2-6} heteroaryl are optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from -R, -NO₂, -OR, -Cl, -Br, -I, -F, -CF₃, -C(=O)R, -C(=O)OH, -NH₂, -SH, -NHR, -NR₂, -SR, -SO₃H, -SO₂R, -S(=O)R, -CN, -OH, -C(=O)OR, -C(=O)NR₂, -NRC(=O)R, and -NRC(=O)-OR, wherein R is, independently, a hydrogen or C_{1-6} alkyl;

R^2 is selected from C_{1-3} alkyl and hydrogen; and

- R^3 is selected from hydrogen, -C(=O)-R⁴, -S(=O)₂-R⁴, and -C(=O)-O-R⁴,
 wherein R⁴ is selected from -H, C_{1-6} alkyl, C_{2-6} alkenyl and C_{2-6} alkynyl.

2. A compound according to claim 1,

- wherein R^1 is selected from phenyl; thiadiazolyl; pyridyl; thienyl; furyl; imidazolyl; triazolyl; pyrrolyl; thiazolyl; and N-oxido-pyridyl, wherein said R^1 is further optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from C_{1-6} alkyl, halogenated C_{1-6} alkyl, -NO₂, -CF₃, C_{1-6} alkoxy, chloro, fluoro, bromo, and iodo;

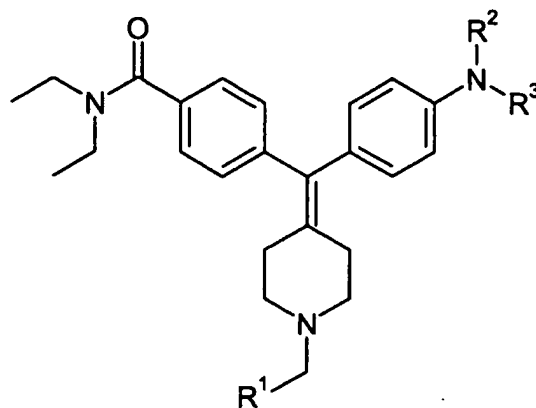
R^2 is selected from C_{1-3} alkyl and hydrogen; and

- R^3 is selected from hydrogen, -C(=O)-R⁴, -S(=O)₂-R⁴, and -C(=O)-O-R⁴,
 wherein R⁴ is C_{1-6} alkyl.

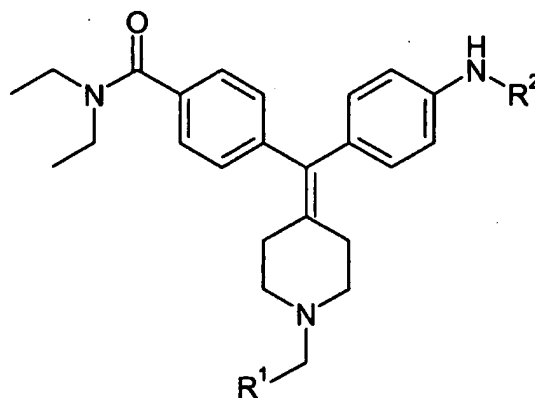
3. A compound according to claim 1,
 wherein R^1 is selected from phenyl; pyridyl; thiadiazolyl and thiazolyl,
 wherein R^1 is further optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from C_{1-6} alkyl, halogenated C_{1-6} alkyl, $-NO_2$, $-CF_3$, C_{1-6} alkoxy, chloro, fluoro, bromo, and
 5 iodo;
 R^2 is hydrogen; and
 R^3 is selected from hydrogen, $-C(=O)-R^4$, $-S(=O)_2-R^4$, and $-C(=O)-O-R^4$,
 wherein R^4 is C_{1-3} alkyl.
- 10 4. A compound according to claim 1, wherein
 wherein R^1 is selected from phenyl; 2-fluorophenyl; 3-fluorophenyl; 4-fluorophenyl; 2-pyridyl; 3-pyridyl; 4-pyridyl; 1,2,3-thiadiazol-4-yl; 4-thiazolyl and 5-thiazolyl;
 R^2 is hydrogen; and
 15 R^3 is selected from hydrogen, $-C(=O)-CH_3$, $-S(=O)_2-CH_3$, and $-C(=O)-O-CH_3$.
5. A compound according to claim 1, wherein the compound is selected from:
 4-[(4-aminophenyl)(1-benzylpiperidin-4-ylidene)methyl]-*N,N*-diethylbenzamide;
 4-[[4-(acetylamino)phenyl](1-benzylpiperidin-4-ylidene)methyl]-*N,N*-
 20 diethylbenzamide;
 4-[[4-(acetylamino)phenyl][1-(pyridin-2-ylmethyl)piperidin-4-ylidene]methyl]-*N,N*-diethylbenzamide;
 4-[[4-(acetylamino)phenyl][1-(pyridin-3-ylmethyl)piperidin-4-ylidene]methyl]-*N,N*-diethylbenzamide;
 25 4-[[4-(acetylamino)phenyl][1-(pyridin-4-ylmethyl)piperidin-4-ylidene]methyl]-*N,N*-diethylbenzamide;
 4-[[4-(acetylamino)phenyl][1-(1,2,3-thiadiazol-4-ylmethyl)piperidin-4-ylidene]methyl]-*N,N*-diethylbenzamide;
 4-[[4-(acetylamino)phenyl][1-(1,3-thiazol-5-ylmethyl)piperidin-4-ylidene]methyl]-
 30 *N,N*-diethylbenzamide;
 4-[[4-(acetylamino)phenyl][1-(1,3-thiazol-4-ylmethyl)piperidin-4-ylidene]methyl]-*N,N*-diethylbenzamide;

- 4-((1-benzylpiperidin-4-ylidene){4-[(methylsulfonyl)amino]phenyl}methyl)-*N,N*-diethylbenzamide;
- methyl 4-((1-benzylpiperidin-4-ylidene){4-[(diethylamino)carbonyl]phenyl}methyl)phenylcarbamate;
- 5 4-{{[4-(acetylamino)phenyl][1-(2-fluorobenzyl)piperidin-4-ylidene]methyl}-*N,N*-diethylbenzamide;
- 4-{{[4-(acetylamino)phenyl][1-(3-fluorobenzyl)piperidin-4-ylidene]methyl}-*N,N*-diethylbenzamide;
- 4-{{[4-(acetylamino)phenyl][1-(4-fluorobenzyl)piperidin-4-ylidene]methyl}-*N,N*-diethylbenzamide;
- 10 and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof.
6. A compound according to any one of claims 1-5 for use as a medicament.
- 15 7. The use of a compound according to any one of claims 1-5 in the manufacture of a medicament for the therapy of pain, anxiety or functional gastrointestinal disorders.
8. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound according to any one of claims 1-5 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.
- 20 9. A method for the therapy of pain in a warm-blooded animal, comprising the step of administering to said animal in need of such therapy a therapeutically effective amount of a compound according to any one of claims 1-5.
- 25 10. A method for the therapy of functional gastrointestinal disorders in a warm-blooded animal, comprising the step of administering to said animal in need of such therapy a therapeutically effective amount of a compound according to any one of claims 1-5.
- 30 11. A process for preparing a compound of formula I, comprising:

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I

reacting a compound of formula II with $X-R^3$ or R^3-O-R^3 :

II

wherein X is halogen;

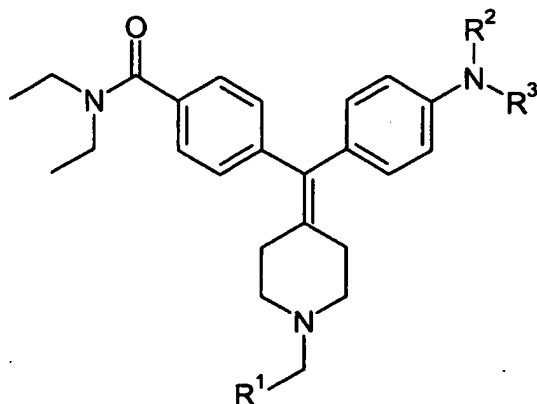
R^1 is selected from C_{6-10} aryl and C_{2-6} heteroaryl, wherein said C_{6-10} aryl and C_{2-6} heteroaryl are optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from -R, -NO₂, -OR, -Cl, -Br, -I, -F, -CF₃, -C(=O)R, -C(=O)OH, -NH₂, -SH, -NHR, -NR₂, -SR, -SO₃H, -SO₂R, -S(=O)R, -CN, -OH, -C(=O)OR, -C(=O)NR₂, -NRC(=O)R, and -NRC(=O)-OR, wherein R is, independently, a hydrogen or C_{1-6} alkyl;

R^2 is selected from C_{1-3} alkyl and hydrogen; and

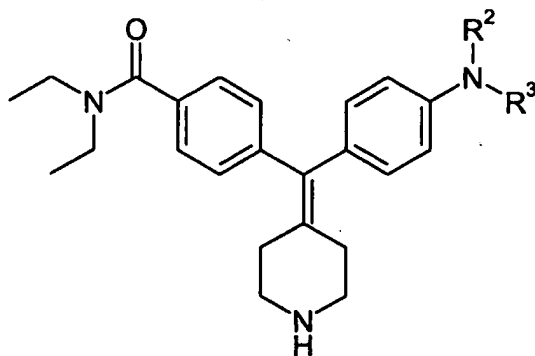
R^3 is selected from -C(=O)-R⁴, -S(=O)₂-R⁴, and -C(=O)-O-R⁴, wherein R⁴ is selected from -H, C_{1-6} alkyl, C_{2-6} alkenyl and C_{2-6} alkynyl.

12. A process for preparing a compound of formula I, comprising:

49

**I**

reacting a compound of formula III with R^1 -CHO:

**III**

5

wherein R^1 is selected from C_{6-10} aryl and C_{2-6} heteroaryl, wherein said C_{6-10} aryl and C_{2-6} heteroaryl are optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from -R, -NO₂, -OR, -Cl, -Br, -I, -F, -CF₃, -C(=O)R, -C(=O)OH, -NH₂, -SH, -NHR, -NR₂, -SR, -SO₃H, -SO₂R, -S(=O)R, -CN, -OH, -C(=O)OR, -C(=O)NR₂, -NRC(=O)R, and -NRC(=O)-OR, wherein R is, independently, a hydrogen or C_{1-6} alkyl;

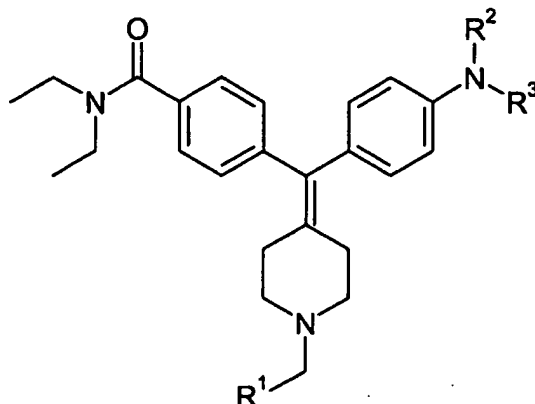
R^2 is selected from C_{1-3} alkyl and hydrogen; and

R^3 is selected from -C(=O)-R⁴, -S(=O)₂-R⁴, and -C(=O)-O-R⁴, wherein R⁴ is selected from -H, C_{1-6} alkyl, C_{2-6} alkenyl and C_{2-6} alkynyl.

15

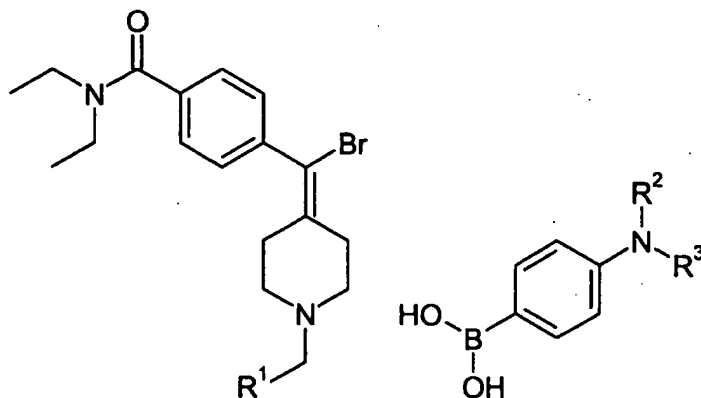
13. A process for preparing a compound of formula I, comprising:

50

I

reacting a compound of formula IV with a compound of formula V or esters thereof:

5

IVV

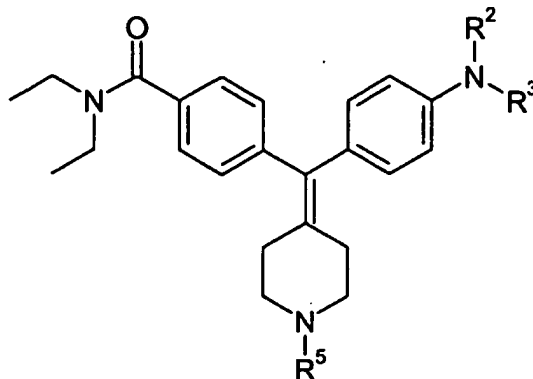
wherein R^1 is selected from C_{6-10} aryl and C_{2-6} heteroaryl, wherein said C_{6-10} aryl and C_{2-6} heteroaryl are optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from -
 10 R, $-NO_2$, $-OR$, $-Cl$, $-Br$, $-I$, $-F$, $-CF_3$, $-C(=O)R$, $-C(=O)OH$, $-NH_2$, $-SH$, $-NHR$, $-NR_2$, $-SR$, $-SO_3H$, $-SO_2R$, $-S(=O)R$, $-CN$, $-OH$, $-C(=O)OR$, $-C(=O)NR_2$, $-NRC(=O)R$, and $-NRC(=O)-OR$, wherein R is, independently, a hydrogen or C_{1-6} alkyl;

R^2 is selected from C_{1-3} alkyl and hydrogen; and

R^3 is selected from $-H$, $-C(=O)-R^4$, $-S(=O)_2-R^4$, and $-C(=O)-O-R^4$, wherein R^4
 15 is selected from $-H$, C_{1-6} alkyl, C_{2-6} alkenyl and C_{2-6} alkynyl.

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14. A compound of formula VI, a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, diastereomers, enantiomers, or mixtures thereof:

VI

- 5 wherein R^2 is selected from C_{1-3} alkyl and hydrogen;
 R^3 is selected from hydrogen, $-C(=O)-R^4$, $-S(=O)_2-R^4$, and $-C(=O)-O-R^4$,
wherein R^4 is selected from $-H$, C_{1-6} alkyl, C_{2-6} alkenyl and C_{2-6} alkynyl; and
 R^5 is selected from hydrogen and $-C(=O)-O-C_{1-6}$ alkyl.